A GUIDE TO ELEPHANTAI

BY

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PREFACE

The first official guide to Elephanta was The Rock Temples of Elephanta or Gharapuri which was published by the late Dr. Burgess in 1871. The account of the monuments of the Island which is given in the Gazetteer of the Thana District was written later in 1882. This was succeeded, first, by the publication entitled The Guide to Elephanta Island, which was published on the occasion of the visit of Their Imperial Majesties King George V and Queen Mary in 1911, and then, by the pamphlet called The Caves of Elephanta which the Bombay Public Works Department issued in 1914. All these publications—leaving aside the books which are published unofficially or privately—are now out of print and a trustworthy and up-to-date guide to the monuments is needed. The present book is meant to meet that need. Several illustrations of sculptures, a plan of the Main Cave, and a map of the Island as well as of its environs are added to assist the visitor. These illustrations are supplied by the Superintendent of the Western Circle of the Archeological Survey of India, Poona. The map of the Island of Elephanta is based on his drawing No. 1318; that of its environs is taken from the Imperial Gazetteer Atlas of India (1931), plate No. 55.
In describing the monuments I am indebted to Dr. Burgess' *The Rock Temples of Ellora and Gharāpuri*. The information which has been gathered about the Portuguese accounts is taken chiefly from the *Gazetteer of the Thana District*. Other books consulted are named in the footnotes, as is the bibliography attached to this Guide.

The caves were excavated about the sixth century (A.D.) and, consequently, do not contain any specimens of early Indian art. The Gupta Empire coincides not only with a revival of temples, but with a wonderful development in sculptural art, which, judging by the works of the time, must have been liberally patronised. Whether in its early stage, Indian sculptural art was marked by a natural simplicity, in the early medieval stage, which commenced about the Gupta period and lasted till about the end of the seventh century, by an "formal" and "cultured". It was during this time that it reached perfection and produced some specimens which rank high among the world's sculptural masterpieces.

The sculptures of Elephanta are exclusively Brahmanical in origin and supply us with beautiful specimens of early mediaeval Hindu art. There can be no two opinions regarding the decorative side, which is universally praised by all. Opinions differ, regarding the formative side or the figure art. The critic, not conversant with Hindu mythology, and its underlying idealism, may not be able to appreciate the Brahmanical sculpture, especially when he considers 'supernatural'. But, one familiar with Hinduism,
not but admire and appreciate the beauty and artistic skill of the workmanship. The late Dr. Vincent Smith, in whom 'medieval sculpture' seems to have 'aroused a feeling of repulsion', had to admit that it had 'undeniable merits'. One might unhesitatingly say with him that the works of the artists 'frequently display high technical skill, great mastery over intractable material, and in the larger compositions, especially those of the western caves, bold imagination and a knowledge of the effects of light and shade. The best specimens of the ascetic type are endowed with serene dignity and convey the impression of perfect repose with extraordinary skill. In the modelling, although realistic representation of the muscles is deliberately avoided, the capacity of the artists to give details, if they were so minded, is attested by the hands, which in many cases are shaped with the utmost delicacy and expressiveness. The energy of passion is sometimes rendered with masterly power, and occasionally, but rarely, facial expression is vividly exhibited'. These remarks apply not only to the Shahmanical but also to the Buddhist sculpture. In the case of the Buddhist sculpture, however, we have to remember that the products of the Hinayana school are more lifelike and natural than those of the Mahayana, whose cult is akin to that of the Hindus of the Aruna school. To the Hinayanist, Gautama Buddha is the sympathetic human teacher, who moves about among his disciples and hearers, expounding the Doctrine or the Sacred Law, but to the follower of the Mahayana, with its Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, its attendant deities and demons, spacious temples and
images, pompous ceremonial and not only the ethereal representation of it is celestial Buddha of Boundless Light the Sattva or the World of the highest Mahayanaism seems to have flourished in the seventh century (A.D.) and to have greatly influenced Hinduism, just as in its turn it must have been influenced by the latter. The tendency to adore the immanent predominated in the minds of the Mahayanists of the Hindus and found expression in the art which they produced. In the later ages it became baneful and made the cult imitated and lifeless, mere symbols, as it were, devoid alike of spirituality and of anatomical The Elephants sculpture, however, was to a extent, free from such an influence, and was mere artificiality and conventional formula upper hand over real art. It was rather of his discretion that enabled the sculptor to the fullest use of his consummate skill and some of the beautiful representations in the caves of Elephants, e.g., the figure of the (frontispiece) standing in a dignified and composure to guard the entrance to the liasa shrine. Not only the Divine Dancer, calm and unperturbed in the whole world moving round him; and Vrishali come with bashfulness at the time of with Siva.

The Main Cave and its adjuncts were originally adorned with paintings, now lost, save a few faint traces. The Portuguese accounts would show the
It probably resembled the Ajanta paintings in colour, beauty and artistic execution.

It is very much to be regretted that these beautiful frescoes suffered so greatly from ruthless vandalism.

Portuguese occupation of the Island when they were used not only as cattle sheds and for fodder but as an artillery testing ground by the British. Had this not been the case, they would in a much better condition and we would have the better circumstances to form a truer idea of ancient beauty.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.—TOPOGRAPHY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory remarks, 1; Approaches to Elephants, 2; Designation of Elephanta, 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.—HISTORY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Period, 5; Evidence of Inscriptions, 6; Later Medieval or Muhammadan Period, 9; Portuguese Period, 10; Maratha Period, 10; British Period, 10; Age of Elephanta sculptures, 10; Preservation, 11; Elephanta in modern times, 12.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.—ABT</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages in the development of sculptural art in India, 13; Early Period, 13; Medieval Period, 14; Renaissance of Hinduism, 15; Two main sects of Hinduism and their effect on Indian art, 15; Main features of Elephanta sculpture, 16; Paintings in the caves, 16; Comparison of Elephanta sculptures with Ellora reliefs, 16; Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures of the medieval period compared, 17; Symbolical interpretation of some of the Elephanta sculptures, 18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.—ANCIENT RELICS FOUND ON THE ISLAND</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone House, 20; Remains on the eastern hill, 20; Stone image of Sadasiva, 21; Some other relics, 22; Inscribed copper-vessel, 22; Carnelian seal, 23.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CONTENTS

#### CHAPTER

V.—The Main Cave

- General description, 24
- Śiva as Naṭarāja, or the King of Dancers, 25
- Śiva the Killer of the demon Andimaka, 26
- Śiva shrine, 29
- Western Court, 32
- Large water-cistern, 33
- Śiva shrine in the western court and its sculptured panels, 33
- Kalyāṇaśundaramūrti-Śiva (Marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī), 35
- Gaṅgādhara-Śiva (Descent of the Ganges), 37
- Cells or store rooms, 39
- Mahēśamūrti-Śiva, 40
- Ardhanārīśvara-Śiva, 43
- Pārvatī in the attitude of māsa (a scene on Kailāsa), 45
- East wing of the cave, 47
- Śiva shrine, sanctuaries, and chapels, 48
- Māyikā panel, 50
- Eastern chapel, 51
- Rāvana under Kailāsa, 51
- Śiva as Lakulīśa, 53
- Paintings, 55

VI.—Smaller Caves

- Caves II—V, 56
- Caves VI—VII, 68
- Other antiquities, 59

### APPENDIX

- 61

### GLOSSARY

- 63

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 69
# LIST OF PLATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>To face page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Door-keeper on east side of Śiva shrine in Main Cave</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Stone Elephant</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Śadākṣaśa</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Inscription on the copper-vessel</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Plan of the Main Cave</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Main Cave, view from North</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Nāṭarāja-Śiva (Śiva the Lord of Dance)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Andhakāsamudravādhamūrti-Śiva (Śiva destroying the demon Andhaka)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>Śiva shrine with door-keepers (North and East)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Kalyāṇamudrāmūrti-Śiva (Marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>Gangaśhāna-Śiva (Descent of the Ganges)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>Mahāśamūrti-Śiva</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>Ardhanārīśvara-Śiva (Śiva as half-male and half-female)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td>Pārvatī in the attitude of sāna (a scene on Kailāśa)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td>Rāvana under Kailāśa</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>Śiva as Lakullā</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td>Caves II, III and IV. General view from Cave No. VI</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>Cave No. VI, View from West</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>Map of the Island of Elephanta</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A GUIDE TO ELEPHANTA

CHAPTER I

TOPOGRAPHY

The Bombay Presidency is exceptionally rich in interesting cave temples which throw a flood of light on the history of architecture and religion in India. According to the estimate of the late Dr. Burgess, there are not less than 900 excavations of various sorts and dimensions in Western India, the majority of which are within the limits of the Bombay Presidency. Near Bombay itself there are at least 130 caves lying on the islands of Elephanta and Salsette. These excavations are divided into three classes according to the sects to which they belong, namely, Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina. The earliest known examples dating from about the third century B.C. are Buddhist. Brahmanical caves, whether connected with the cult of Śiva or of Viṣṇu, come next in order of time and seem to range from about the fourth to about the eighth century (A.D.). The caves at Elephanta come under this category and are connected with the worship of Śiva. Earlier writers attributed them to the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century. This date, however, seems to be too late, for, in consideration of the technical achievement as well as other reasons given in the sequel,
it can reasonably be assumed that they were excavated about the sixth century (A.D.). Plastic art in India, which was at its zenith in the Gupta period, began to deteriorate during the later ages. This being the case, it becomes doubtful if we could get such sublime images as we find in these caves during the period of its decay.

The Island of Elephanta is situated in 18° 58' N. and 72° 58' E., about seven miles north-east of the Apollo Bandar. It consists of two hills, separated by a narrow valley, and measures about 3½ miles in circumference. The surface area varies from 6 to 4 square miles according as the tide is at ebb or flow.

Elephanta is a range of small hills wooded with mango, tamarind, karanda, and other trees. The hill rises gently on the west and, with an irregular outline, stretches east across the ravine, gradually rising at the extreme east to a height of 588 feet above the sea. The foreshore of sand and mud is fringed by mangrove bushes, occasional palms dotting the background of low hills. Palms are also to be seen adorning the hills here and there.

Very few people inhabit the Island, and their chief occupation is to cultivate rice and rear sheep or poultry for sale in the Bombay market.

The most convenient way of visiting the caves of Elephanta is by a ferry boat or motor-launch from the Apollo Bandar or by the harbour ferry from the Carnac Bandar. These boats run daily in the afternoon; but on Sundays, the motor-launch goes twice, once
in the morning and again in the afternoon. They make the passage in about 2 hours. During the winter season a motor-launch goes to Elephanta from the Apollo Bandar twice daily, first at about 8-30 A.M. and again at about 2-30 P.M. The launches and the ferry-boats land passengers at the modern landing-place which lies towards the north-west side of Elephanta. The caves are about a quarter of a mile from this place and can be reached by easy steps which, according to an inscribed tablet fixed in them, were constructed in 1804 by a merchant named Thakar Karamai Ranmal Lohana. At the foot of these steps coolies can be engaged to carry visitors in wooden chairs swung on their shoulders. The harbour ferry stops at the old landing-place at Rajghat, lying to the south-west of the Island; whence the caves are reached by a walk of nearly one mile over a fairly good but unmetalled road.

The name Elephanta, by which the Island is now universally known, originated with the Portuguese who so designated the place after a colossal stone statue of an elephant standing near Rajghat, the landing-place. This statue measured 13' 2" by 7' 4". The head as well as the neck of it dropped off in 1814 and later the remainder of the statue fell to pieces. In 1854, however, the mass of stones comprising the statue was removed to the Victoria Gardens in Bombay where it was re-set. The accompanying photograph represents it as it stands at present. The sketch given by Burgess in the title page of his Rock Temples of Elephanta or Ghirâpurî is a copy of the drawing which Captain Basil Hall, R.N., prepared in 1814.
To the local people, including the boatmen of Bombay, the island is known by the name of Ghārāpuri, which may have been the old Hindu designation of it, although there is no known inscriptive or literary evidence to support this hypothesis. What this designation really means is not clear. That the second part of the name, viz., puri, signifies 'town' does not require demonstration. As to the first component, some writers have connected it with the Ghāris or Guruvas, the Śūdra priests of some Śaivite temples. Ghārāpuri, in that case, would mean the town of the Ghāri-priests. But I would connect it with the Prakrit word ghara, meaning fort or fortress-wall (= Sanskrit prākara). The name Ghārāpuri, in that case, would signify 'fortress-city' and would be quite an appropriate designation for the island. From a short inscription, incised on the copper vessel mentioned further on, it would appear, however, that about the 11th century (A.D.), the name of the island was possibly Śripuri, meaning the town of wealth.

1 See Dauḥāmarakāda, II. 108.
2 See p. 22 f. and plate IV.
3 If ī is only an honorific prefix, the name would mean 'the celebrated town'. This appellation would suggest another derivation—pura may be a derivative of the Sanskrit root pur, 'to sprinkle'. Ghārāpuri might have been the city of coronation, in which case Śripuri would be a suitable alternative name.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY

For the early history of the Island we have to Early Period depend on tradition alone, as no records which might throw any light on it are now forthcoming. The stone inscription which was removed to Europe about 1640 by the Portuguese Viceroy Dom João de Castro, if found and deciphered, might help us in elucidating it. The Portuguese, according to Diogo de Couto, when they took "Báçain" and its dependencies "went to this pagoda and removed a famous stone over the entrance that had an inscription of large and well-written characters which was sent to the king, after the Governor of India had in vain endeavoured to find out any Hindu or Moor in the East who would decipher them. And the king D. João III also used all his endeavours to the same purpose but without any effect, and the stone thus remained there and now there is no trace of it." The Thana District Gazetteer speaks of two inscribed copper-plates also, which were found "in treading earth in the north-east corner of the Island and are believed to have been in England in the possession of one Mr. Harold Smith, a contractor, who took them there about 1865 A.D." No information is available as to their contents and the place where they are now preserved.

There are several local traditions or folk-tales connected with the origin of these excavations, but they are of little or no historical value. One of them

\[1\] Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. XIV, p. 80, l.m. 1.
connects the excavations with the five Pándava heroes of the Mahábharata; another, with the mythical Asura king Bāṇa and his beautiful daughter Ushá, while the third ascribes them to Alexander the Great.

No history of Elephanta is available and we have to draw inferences regarding it from the very scanty material which may be gathered from a few inscriptions known to us. That Western India formed part of the vast Mauryan Empire during the reign of Asóka is an established historical fact which does not require any corroboration. Elephanta is quite close to the mainland and its very situation would suggest that whoever governed the coastal regions also governed it. Whether it remained under the uninterrupted sway of the Mauryas even after the break up of the Mauryan Empire it is impossible to affirm with definiteness. Circumstantial evidence, however, would indicate that it probably did so. The Aihole inscription would show that a Maurya dynasty was ruling the west coast of India during the first half of the seventh century after Christ. This document is dated in the 656th year of the Śaka era (=634-35 A.D.) and records that Pulakśin II, the successful Chálukya ruler of Western India, sent his hosts to the 'Konkānas' and vanquished the Mauryas there.²

¹ In the Appendix to the Medieval Temples of the Dakta (Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. XLVIII, Impl. Series, pp. 79 ff., where several references to Puri are given, mention is made of a copper-plate grant of A.D. 554. In the absence of details it is not known which grant is meant. The statements made in the Appendix regarding Chañapalana require revision.

² Ep. Ind., Vol. VI, pp. 1 ff. The 26th stanza of this inscription has been thus rendered by K. H. : "In the Konkānas, the impetuous waves of the forces directed by him speedily swept away the shiny waves of pala—the Mauryas."
The term Konkana connotes the whole of the strip of land lying between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, although it is used in a somewhat limited sense also. That the Konkana Mauryas were conquered by the Early Chalukyas is also recorded in the Kauthem grant of Vikramaditya V dated Saka 331 (=1009 A.D.). The Kaśaswa stone inscription of Sivagana which is dated in the Mālava year 796 expired (=738-39 A.D.) glorifies the illustrious Maurya race and the king of that lineage named Dhaval, describing him as a ‘supreme’ ruler.

This would show that Mewār and the surrounding tracts were held by a Maurya dynasty during the eighth century after Christ. The Nausāri (Baroda State) plates of the Gujarāt Chālukya Pulakesīrāja, dated in the Kalachuri year 490 (i.e., 739 A.D.), would also show that the Konkana Mauryas must have been ruling in the west of India though they were conquered by the Arabs in the eighth century. These Arabs, who are styled as Tajiks in the document, were in turn routed by Avanijñākara Pulakesīrāja. Further, the Vaghul (Khundesh) inscription of the Saka year 991 (=1069 A.D.) mentions a Maurya chief named Gōvindarāja as a
subordinate of the Devagiri Yadava feudatory prince Sœnamachandra II, and states that the original town of the Mauryas or rather of this branch of the Maurya stock was Valabhi, the modern Wa in Surishtra or Katihar. In view of all these inscriptive records it stands to reason to hold that the country lying round Bombay including the coast of Southern Gujarât was governed by the chiefs of the Maurya lineage even up to the tenth century after Christ.  

The Aihole inscription to which reference has been made above tells us that Pulakasín II reduced Puri after attacking it "with hundreds of ships." This Puri was evidently the capital of the Kœkana Mauryas and was praised as "the Goddess of Fortune of the western Sea." The identity of this Puri has not yet been determined; but from what this document states about it, it is not unreasonable to surmise that it stood somewhere near or on the sea. Presumably it lay on the Island of Elephanta itself. This Island is rich in ancient remains. A portion of it, now a hamlet standing on the north-easter-
most side of the Island, still bears the name Mora (marked on the accompanying map) which is only a reminiscence of the term Maurya. The old landing-place is still called Rājpurī which reminds us of the Puri of the Aihole inscription. In the year 1379 A.D. the Island went by the name of Purī. The inscription incised on the copper- vessel, published in the sequel, mentions the town of Śrīpurī, which is probably identical with this Purī, for Ṣrī can well be taken as only an honorific prefix. Assuming this identity we might say that Elephants was being governed by the Kusāna Mauryas when it was taken by the Chalukyas. From the latter it went to the Rāshtrakūtas, who defeated the Chalukyas, and thereafter it went to the Chalukyas of Kalyāṇī in the reign of Tailâ II (civ. 997 A.D.) and from them to the Yādavas. All these dynasties governed the west coast of India one after the other.

The Yādava dynasty was vanquished by the Moslem invaders about the end of the thirteenth century (A.D.). When Alaūd-dīn Khālji overthrew the Yādavas in 1294 (A.D.) the Island must have fallen into his hands. During the greater part of the 16th and the beginning of the 16th century it was, along with the rest of the coast of Thāna, nominally under the Moslem rulers of Ahmadābād.
In 1584 the Island passed into the hands of the Portuguese and was rented to one João Fires for the annual quit-rent of 165 pardos. It was under the control of the latter till 1648, when it passed to Manuel Rebello da Silva, who made it over to his daughter, Dona Rosa Maria Manuel d'Almeida.

In the year 1682 the Island must have formed part of the Maratha dominion, for, Sambhaji is said to have threatened the Portuguese by fortifying it against them about that time. Even the great Shivaji is believed to have started founding a fort on the top of its main hill, which commands Bombay and also the sea to a great extent.

The Island was finally occupied by the British, who took it in December 1774. In connection with the defence of Bombay, a battery of heavy guns was established on the top of the western hill, but the Island is no longer of any military importance.

Assuming that the Purī of the Aihole inscription in the modern Elephanta it will not be unreasonable to infer from what has been stated above that the sculptures of Elephanta were in existence at the time of Pulakśin II, i.e., about the first half of the seventh century A.D. On the evidence of the carnelian seal described below, a still earlier date might be assigned to them. Their age will go still farther back if the figure, which according to Burgess, Porphyry the

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5° According to Webster's New International Dictionary one Pardo = four shillings roughly.
7° Page 22.
8° The Rock Temples of Elephanta, etc., pp. 39, 67-68.
Greek scholar and historian (circa 304 A.D.) described in his treatise entitled de Stige, were identical with the representation of Ardhanarishvara-Siva, found in one of the panels of the Main Cave. I am however of the opinion that the sculptures of Elephanta, executed as they are with great artistic skill, belong to a period when Hindu sculpture was at its zenith and were in all probability wrought in the Gupta epoch of Indian history. Plastic art in India began to deteriorate during the later period and could not have produced the fine statues we see in these caves.

The accounts given by some annalists of Portugal, as recorded by Burgess in his book on Elephanta or in the Thana District Gazetteer, would show that the caves of Elephanta were more or less intact when the Portuguese took possession of the Island in 1534. Dom João de Castro saw the caves in 1569 and being struck by their fine execution considered them to be the work of some "superhuman" agency. In 1579 Garcia d'Orta found them much damaged by cattle. J. H. Van Linschoten visited the Island in 1579 A.D. and described the caves as deserted and ruined. In his Discourse of Voyages he mentions the Island by the name of Pory which would show that in the sixteenth century (A.D.) it must have been known by the designation of Puri. According to Diogo da Conceição, the caves were further spoiled by the mischievous soldiers at the beginning of the 17th century. Then again in 1673 they further suffered at the hands of the Portuguese who used them as cattle sheds and stored fodder there during the rainy
season. In 1712, one of their hidalgoes fired several shots from a big gun into the great cave to divert himself with the echo, and thus broke some of its pillars. Grove (1750) described the caves as waterlogged. According to him the sculptures were in a tolerable state of preservation until the arrival of the Portuguese, who were at some pains to main and deface them, even bringing field pieces to the demolition of the images! Cave No. VI, which lies on the eastern hill, then served as a Christian Church. In 1865 the noses of two of the faces of the Maheshamurti (mis-called Trimurti) figure are said to have been damaged.

From the time it was occupied by the British in 1774, a small garrison was maintained on the Island for many years in connection with the harbour defences and the caves were then under the military authorities. In 1875, King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, was entertained here at a banquet. From 1890 the Public Works Department began to look after the monuments and take steps to arrest the progress of further decay. Many of the pillars, which were in a parlous condition, were strengthened and repaired, though a good deal of what was desirable from an archaeological point of view could not be accomplished. In 1909, the monuments of the Island were declared "Protected" under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. Since then they are being conserved with necessary care by the Indian Archaeological Department.

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CHAPTER III

Art

The sculptural art of ancient India is usually believed to have commenced in the reign of Aśoka, the great Mauryan Emperor, whose rule lasted from circa 273 to circa 232 B.C., though we may yet discover evidence of an even earlier date. Like other kinds of art, it has undergone three phases of development: the initial stage, the stage of perfection and the stage of decay. Each of these stages is marked by distinguishing features and may be assigned to different schools of thought. Chronologically these schools may be termed Early, Medieval and Late. For the sake of convenience we might ascribe them to periods ranging from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D., then from the fourth to the eighth century A.D. and, lastly, from the ninth to the twelfth century A.D. Here we are not concerned with the art of the period preceding the Mauryan epoch; nor have we much to do with the products of the times which followed the twelfth century A.D. The plastic art of ancient India began to deteriorate in the thirteenth century A.D.

The Early school of sculpture was at its best during Early Period, the ascendancy of the Asokas in the first century B.C. The sculptures of Elephanta contain no specimen of this school. They came into existence long afterwards. Yet it is necessary to know the characteristic features of the early period so that the sculp-

1This division is to be treated as conventional.
tural products of the Mediaeval school may be properly appreciated. The keynotes of the Early school, in brief, were the natural simplicity and the transparent sincerity with which the sculptor narrated the legends in the expressive language of the chisel in order to glorify religion. It is because of this simplicity that the products of the early period still appeal to our feelings.

The Mediaeval school flourished during the Gupta period, commonly held to have lasted from about 350 to about 650 A.D. During this epoch sculptural art in India reached the stage of perfection. A comparison of the products of the Early and the Mediaeval schools would show that during the Gupta age sculptural art became "cultured, more formal, more self-conscious and more complex," and that whereas the Early school took the formative side as a mere medium to narrate religious stories, the Mediaeval school established a closer contact of thought with art and required the sculptor to be much more artistic and to pay greater attention to the technique in order to make his work realistic and lifelike. And the Mediaeval school was wonderfully successful in producing beautiful specimens not only well defined and symmetrical in outline but also remarkably expressive of modesty, calm contemplation and repose. Some of the best figure-sculptures left to us, such as the Buddha image at Sārnāth near Benares, the Vishnu and Śiva images at Deogarh in the Lalitpur sub-division of the Jhansi district in the United Provinces, the imposing reliefs at Ellora and the magnificent sculptures of Elephanta, are the outcome of this school.
The Gupta epoch was marked by the "Renaissance" of arts in India and a general outburst of the mental activity of her people, perhaps never equalled before or since. During this age, not only was the country prosperous and learning in all its branches encouraged, but arts and crafts were patronised on all sides and a great impetus imparted to the religious activities of the people. The Gupta Emperors like Samudragupta or his son Chandragupta, great patrons of Brahmanism as they were, revived the old rites or ceremonies and _yajñas_ like the Āsvamēdha which had remained forgotten for a very long time. Their personal encouragement must have led to the complete revival of Hinduism, so lucidly reflected in the sculptures of the period. These potent rulers were, no doubt, officially Brahmanical Hindus, but according to the custom prevalent in ancient India, they looked on every Indian religion with a favourable eye. In spite of their toleration, however, Buddhism suffered a gradual decay during their ascendancy, as is evidenced by the accounts of Fa-hien and Hsuan-tsang, the well-known Chinese pilgrims, who came to India about this time.

Hinduism has two main branches or sects, namely, Vaishnavism and Śaivism. The former regards Viṣṇu and the latter, Siva, as the Supreme Lord. Though both these sects have, in their turn, contributed largely to the development of plastic art, yet, it is rather the latter, i.e., Śaivism, which has added a new chapter to its history by producing some of the best cave temples and sculptures in India. The caves of Elephanta,
also were the outcome of the activities of this branch of Hinduism.

As has been noted before, the sculptures of Elephanta possess most of the distinguishing features of the Medieval period. Some of the colossal figures seen in these caves are marked by reasoned restraint of ornament and a definition of detail as well as 'vitality', which the products of the later period do not possess.

The Main Cave and its adjuncts were originally decorated with paintings which have now disappeared. Had they been preserved, the Elephanta sculptures would have given us beautiful examples not only of plastic art but of the art of painting as well. The traces of these paintings still to be seen in the ceilings of the Main Cave and elsewhere are noted in the sequel, where their description, as supplied by the Portuguese and other eye-witnesses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is given.

The caves of Elephanta give us some of the best specimens of Brahmanical or Hindu art, the equal of which is not easily found elsewhere. The imposing reliefs of Ellora, like the Bhairava figure in the Dānakutėna temple representing the rescue of Markandeya by Śiva, also furnish us with similar examples, but it is doubtful if they can rank with the best figures we see in the caves of Elephanta, such as the representations of Nātarāja and of Sadāśiva. The Ellora sculptures are less accomplished in technique, though more florid in style, and on that account seem to belong to a somewhat later period.
It may not be out of place here to draw a very brief comparison between the Buddhist and the Hindu sculpture of the Mediaeval period. There is a great deal of similarity in the technique or artistic skill of both. So far as the 'ascetic ideal' is concerned, the Śaiva and the Buddhist sculptures have much in common, for, the Buddha, like Śiva, was also a māhā-yōgin, i.e., a great ascetic. Śiva and his deeds were the theme of the Śaivite sculptures just as the Buddha and the legends connected with his previous births form the main subject of the Buddhist sculptures. Śiva is the personification of the 'ascetic life' and of the 'Supreme Knowledge' without which mākṣha or final emancipation cannot be gained. By nature he is a yōgin or ascetic and, consequently, the incidents of his life could only be few. His incarnations were not so multifarious as those of Vishnu, who, to relieve the gods as well as human beings of their distress, had to manifest himself in more numerous forms or avatāras than Śiva. The Buddha was also an ascetic par excellence, but before he attained Būddhi (or Enlightenment) he had to undergo countless metempsychoses giving rise to the Jātakas or birth stories, a number of which have been so beautifully depicted in the well-known reliefs at Bharhut, Śānchi and other places. The result was that the artist, having the 'ascetic ideal' to follow, did not get as large a scope to represent the myths of Śiva as he did in the case of Vishnu or, more especially, of the Buddha. Śaiva sculpture would, therefore, either represent the god as a great ascetic and give the myths connected with his creative as well as destructive powers, or would
tell the popular stories of Śiva or of his consort Pārvatī. Like the ideal yōga or ascetic, he is represented as wrapped up in meditation, regardless of what was going on around and even forgetful of Pārvatī. The Buddha is also shown similarly absorbed in contemplation at the time when he assumed 'the adamantine pose' with the firm resolve not to get up till he attained Bodhi, i.e., Supreme Knowledge. The Buddhist sculptures, especially of the Hinayāna school, where the Buddha figures as a historical personage, are much more realistic or natural than the Brahmanical ones. The products of the Mahāyāna school of thought, on the other hand, are cumbered with conventionalities and artificialities, as are the Brahmanical sculptures. Like the latter, they too are tinged with supernatural or transcendental features, such as multitudinous arms, heads, etc. These features gradually became more and more predominant, the result being that the Buddhist as well as the Hindu sculptures became after the twelfth century (A.D.) merely lifeless symbols of religion devoid of any spirituality.

The sculptures of Elephanta owed their origin to Saivism, and they therefore illustrate and reflect the lofty idealism as well as the intellectuality of the early Śaiva philosophy. To understand and appraise them at their real artistic value, some knowledge of Hindu mythology and metaphysics is indispensable. We may take some examples. The first panel on our left (Plate XVI), when we enter the Main Cave, gives a beautiful representation of Śiva as the yōga or ascetic absorbed in meditation. In his destructive aspect he is shown (Plate VIII) as the killer of Andhaka, the
personification of darkness or ignorance that blinds human beings and is vanquished only by the trident of light or knowledge. The Mahēśamūrti figure, miscalled Trimūrti, which is one of the finest reliefs in all India and, evidently, the principal sculpture in the Main Cave, is a vivid expression of the unification of the three different aspects of the Supreme Being. It shows Siva not only as the Destroyer but also as the Creator and the Preserver of the Universe. The face that represents him as the Preserver is marked by a repose, seldom met with in other sculptures. As the great Creator he is very powerfully depicted in the first panel to our right (Plate VII). The sculpture represents him as Nataraja and visualises his mystic dance of creation. The god is here shown as setting the whole universe in motion, himself remaining unperturbed. The wild movements of his limbs, the waving of the arms and the legs as shown in the sculpture, are markedly contrasted with the serenity and dispassionateness so vividly expressed in the face. The vigour and the skill with which the artist has brought out this contrast would have been still more striking had the mineral colours decorating the carvings been preserved in their original beauty. The idea depicted in the panel is one of the most inspired and majestic conceptions of Hindu art, and the image of Siva, as drawn in it, is undoubtedly a work of consummate skill.
CHAPTER IV

ANCIENT RELICS FOUND ON THE ISLAND

STONE HORSE. Besides the stone elephant and the inscriptions mentioned before several minor remains of considerable interest have been found on the Island. Of these, the stone horse deserves first mention although it is now irretrievably lost. It stood somewhere on the eastern ridge of the hills, near the top of the ravine where the hills draw close together, and was probably carved out of a block of trap. Dr. Fryer noticed it in 1675. Ovington (1690) described it more fully, though perhaps less accurately, as "so lively, with such a colour and carriage, and the shape finished with that exactness that many have fancied it, at a distance, a living animal, rather than only a bare representation". Pyke in 1712 called it Alexander's Horse and gave a drawing of it showing a stiff zebra-like animal whose lower part was not cut out of the rock. According to Hamilton (1720) it was not so well-shaped as the elephant. It seems to have disappeared during the following forty or fifty years, as neither du Peron (1760) nor Niebuhr (1764) remarked upon it in their accounts of the Island.

REMAINS ON THE EASTERN HILL.

Among the remains, on the eastern hill, besides the two caves (Nos. VI and VII) and the water cisterns, the solid brick structure, which stands above them at a height of about 500 feet, is of importance. In 1882

1 See the Map, Plate XIX.
Mr. Henry Cousens, the then Superintendent of Archaeology, Western Circle, examined it by sinking a shaft in the middle but without any definite results. Further examination is needed to ascertain its real character. It may have been a Buddhist stupa, and the water-cisterns below it might have belonged to the monastery attached to it. The bricks with which it was constructed measure about 15 in. x 9 in. x 2\frac{1}{2} in. and show that it was constructed about the Gupta period (c. 5th century A.D.).

Amongst the movable antiquities found on the Island, the fragmentary stone image of Sadāśiva, now deposited in the Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay, is specially noteworthy. It is executed with great artistic skill and is called by some art critics a masterpiece of Indian sculptural genius. The pedestal which we see detached in the photograph (Plate III) possibly belonged to it. There is a much-worn Kanara inscription incised on this pedestal which, on paleographic grounds, can be assigned to about the ninth century (A.D.). The extant portion of the record reads

_Baladāri pratishtā Śiva...vānākāmi_,

meaning

consacrated by Baladāri....Śiva of_.

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1 It is taken to be a watch tower in the Annual Progress Report of the Western Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1901, p. 9.

2 It is incorrect to take it as the representation of Brahmu, the god of creation, and to hold that the Main Cave was a temple of Brahmu and that the figure was originally enthroned in the Main Cave and that the image which is now found there was put in afterwards. See Mr. Havers' _Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India: A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilization_, p. 100.
The mention of Śiva in the inscription would lend strong support to the identification of the sculpture with Śiva.

Of the other portable antiquities which were found on the Island, including the fragmentary stone images of Viṣṇu and of Maḥishāsuramardini, which are also preserved in the aforesaid institution at Bombay, two deserve special mention. One is a copper jar found in the silt of the large cistern lying in the west wing of the Main Cave. On its neck there is a short Devanāgarī inscription, in corrupt Sanskrit, reading:

[Oh!] Saṅvat 1143 Kṣahya-mahavarta(ta)|
Chaitra-adha (ṣūrd) 14 Śripurī-cīna(sha)ya|m
Śrī-Jōgēsvari(rī)-dēvīḥ tānā(m)palai[44]
lokākrītta(l)āb[(ta)]|]

It may be translated thus:

In the Sāvat year 1143, the cyclic year Kṣahya, on the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra here in the district (?) of Śripuri of the goddess Jōgēsvari (this vessel) was made of 194 palas of copper.

The date given in this record corresponds to Wednesday, the 16th April, 1086 A.D. On account of its being easily portable it cannot be stated definitely whether the vessel originally belonged to the cave or was brought from outside. But as it came from the cistern, it may not have been extraneous. It was used for taking out:

4 The word which follows Śripuri actually reads śripura, but has been corrected into viṣṇayā, meaning 'in the district or division of'. If it is taken as it stands in the inscription, i.e., as śripurī, it can be rendered by 'in the jurisdiction of'.

The mention of Śiva in the inscription would lend strong support to the identification of the sculpture with Śiva.
ANCIENT RELICS FOUND ON THE ISLAND

water and, apparently, fell into the reservoir whence it was removed. As stated before, we cannot say with certainty whether the name of the locality was Puri or Śripuri. Assuming that the vessel belonged to the cave, the record makes it very probable that the place went by the name of Śripuri about the 11th century after Christ. The word Jōgāvari occurring in the inscription reminds us of the Yōgāvari caves in the Thāna district and would lead to the surmise that both these excavations were under one control.

A similar relic is a small seal, which, according to Carnelian Burgess, was dug out in 1869. It is stated to be an oval light ruby coloured carnelian tablet measuring 0·435 in. long and 0·35 in. broad. The face is an ellipse measuring 0·37 by 0·26 inch and bears the legend "Nārāyaṇa" engraved on it in letters of the 5th or 6th century A.D. It was in the possession of the late Dr. Bhaū Daji when Burgess published an account of it, but where it is now is not known.

* Rock Temples of Elephanta or Čhīrāpurī, p. 80.*
CHAPTER V

THE MAIN CAVE

Of all the excavations to be seen on the Island of Elephanta, the Main or Great Cave (marked No. 1 on the accompanying map) is the most important. It lies on the western hill of the Island at an elevation of about 250 feet above the sea level. In front of it, a paved open terrace, about 80 yards long and 40 yards broad, shaded by large rain trees and commanding a fine view, stretches to the north-east. The entrance to the cave has recently been enclosed by an open railing. On either side a rocky bank rises to a rugged tree-fringed front, about 40 feet high. The cave (Plate V), hewn out of a hard compact species of trap rock, has three openings, one on the north, another on the east and the third on the western side, thus giving ample light to the interior. The principal entrance, indeed the only one that can now be said to be quite open, faces north. Over its front, across the whole breadth, ran the caves, about 4 feet deep, which have now disappeared together with the two front pillars. The cave consists of a central hall and four aisles or vestibules. From the front or north entrance to the back, it measures about 130 feet, and its length from the east to the west entrance is also approximately the same. The porticoes on the three sides are about 54 feet long and 16½ feet deep. The depth as well as the height varies on the east and west sides. The body of the cave is supported by six rows of columns, six in each row, except at the corners on the
west side, where the uniformity is broken to make room for the shrine. These columns seem to differ not only in size and shape but even in their principal details. Actual measurement shows that no two of them stand in a line. The noteworthy feature these columns possess is the fluted or pot-shaped capital (Plate VI) with which they are adorned. In this decoration they closely resemble the columns found in some of the caves at Ellora.

Each of the porticoes has two pillars and two pilasters. The main columns are very massive and originally numbered twenty-six, besides the sixteen which are attached to them. Eight have been destroyed and the others are much injured. As neither the floor nor the roof is perfectly horizontal, they vary in height from 15 to 17 feet.

We now proceed to examine the sculptures in the cave. Starting from the right side, the principal figure in this compartment (marked A on the plan) which is first seen is of Śiva, shown as Natarāja or the 'King of Dancers'. The compartment is raised on a low base and is 10 feet 9 inches wide and 13 feet deep, the height being 11 feet 2 inches. The central figure must have been about 10 feet 8 inches in height and seems to have suffered a good deal during the past century. From the account of Dr. W. Hunter it would appear that the first right and the third left hand were entire in 1873. Now only the fourth left hand remains. This figure of Natarāja seems to have had eight arms. The first right arm, perhaps, passed across the body and came to the left side about the
waist, and the second was thrown out from the body, the fore-arm being bent so as to bring the hand before the breast. Now it is broken beyond the elbow. The third fore-arm is entirely gone; it probably held a paraśu or battle-axe, with a cobra, the rod of the axe being touched by the fourth arm which is bent upwards; the hand is broken off. The first two arms on the left side were probably hanging down though they are now broken off near the wrists; the third is bent upwards but similarly damaged; the fourth is extended above the shoulder and seems to hold up a portion of the robe. The right thigh is bent outward but broken off near the knee, and the left leg is entirely gone. The armlets, which have been elaborately wrought, are still sharp and distinct, as is also the belt round the waist tied at the side, with its end fastened to a part of the robe spread over the right thigh (Plate VII).

To the left of Śiva is the figure of Pārvatī, 6 feet 9 inches in height. Her face, bosom and hands are damaged and she wears large ear-rings, broad ornamented armlets, a girdle with carefully carved drapery and a thick necklace from which hangs a pendant. To the right side of Śiva is to be seen a well-cut and almost complete figure of Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed god, holding a paraśu or axe in his right hand and possibly a broken tusk in the left hand. A little below him is the skeleton form of Bhūrīti, the devoted attendant of Śiva, shown in the same dancing posture as his master. Beyond it, towards the proper right, is a large female figure with a high cap, having a crescent and a skull with a snake emerging from it. The mace or spear held in the right hand would show that it
Natarāja Śiva (Śiva the Lord of Dancers).
represents Kumāra, the commander-in-chief of the gods. In front of him is a sitting figure probably of the musician Tāndu, the disciple of Śiva and Bharata’s teacher in the art of dancing, supposed to be the originator of the frantic dance called Tāṇḍava. To the left of Kumāra stands a damaged female figure whose dress has been carefully and sharply cut. The head is mutilated. The legs, as well as the fore-arms, are completely gone.

Above this group is Brahmā, the god of creation. He has four faces, and is carried by five hamsas, or swans. His front and rear right hands and also the front left hand are broken. The rear left hand has an ājya-pātra or sacrificial vessel for holding ghōs or clarified butter. Between Brahmā and the head of Śiva are three flying figures, a male between two females, representing some celestials. A similar group is shown on the opposite side as well. Behind Brahmā are two standing figures, one of which, with hair gathered up, seems to be some rishi or ascetic. Above the right shoulder of Pārvati, Vishnu is shown riding his vehicle Garuda, whose head is gone. In one hand Vishnu holds the gada or mace, and in the other, the śārīra or conch. Over Pārvati’s left shoulder Indra, riding his elephant Airāvata, is to be seen. The damaged figure behind Vishnu, which holds a water vessel or kamandalu, perhaps represents some ascetic similar to the one on the opposite side.

The next panel represents Śiva as the killer of the demon Andhaka and is one of the finest specimens of sculpture of the period to which the cave belongs.
(Plate VIII). The principal figure here measures about 11½ feet in height and has a high and profusely carved head-dress showing a skull, a cobra and a crescent over the forehead. The expression of the face is fierce and passionate; the jaws are set and the tusks project downwards from the corners of the mouth. The eyes are large and apparently swollen with rage. Over the left shoulder and across the thighs hangs a ruciṣa-mālā or garland of skulls. Śiva is here represented with eight arms, though five of them are now mutilated as are both the legs. The front right and left hands were broken by the Portuguese in the 16th century and the others have suffered since. All the arms have ornaments below the shoulders and bracelets on the wrists. The second right hand wields a long sword ready to strike; the third holds some indistinct object, while the fourth is broken a little above the elbow. The second left hand holds a bowl under the victim Andhaka who is seen pierced through by the trisulā or trident, the terrible weapon of Śiva, while the third holds a bell to intamate the moment when the fatal blow is to be struck at the victim. The fourth left arm is now broken; with the corresponding right arm, it must have held the goa-chārma or elephant's hide, the raiment of Śiva, who in consequence of his wearing it is called Krūtriśas (=covered with skin). Here it looks like a screen or background, but the head of the elephant shown by the side of the god and the story given below would make it quite clear that it could be nothing else. Śiva wraps the hide round his loins. But here, he is represented in a state of frenzied excitement and is flourishing it in the air.
ANDHAKASURANAGHAMURTISIVA (SIVA DESTROYING THE DEMON ANDHAKA)
The legend connected with this sculpture is thus described in the Purāṇas:

Andhaka, one of the sons of Kaśyapa by his wife Diti, was a powerful king of the Asuras or demons. Through his austere penance he propitiated Brahmā and got several boons from him. Owing to these boons he became invincible and worsted the gods at every step. Thereupon the gods approached Śiva and complained to him of their woes. While Śiva was listening to their troubles, Andhaka came to Kailāsa to carry off Pārvatī. Śiva was enraged at his audacity and got ready to fight and vanquish him. At that very time, Nila, another demon, assumed the form of an elephant and secretly approached Śiva to kill him. Nandin, the devoted attendant of Śiva came to know of this and informed Virabhadrā, who assumed the shape of a lion and killed Nila. The skin of this elephant was presented by Virabhadrā to Śiva. Thereafter, Śiva set out with his gopas or attendants as well as Viṣṇu and other gods to kill Andhaka. He struck the demon with his arrow and blood began to flow profusely from the wound caused by it. Each drop of the blood, as it touched the earth, gave rise to another Andhaka demon. Thus there arose thousands of such demons to fight against Śiva and the other gods who helped him. Thereupon Śiva thrust his trisula or trident into the body of the original and real Andhaka demon and began to dance. With his chakra or discus Viṣṇu started cutting down the secondary asuras or demons produced from the drops of the blood of the principal one. To stop the blood from falling on the earth Śiva created the Sakti, called Yōgēsvari, and other gods also sent
out their Saktis or energies in female forms, characterised by their attributes, to catch all the drops of blood as they fell from the demon and stop further multiplication of the secondary Andhakas. Finally, the demon lost his vitality and was vanquished by Siva, who consequently became known as Andhaka-ripu or the enemy (i.e., killer) of Andhaka.

The figures below the principal one are badly mutilated. To the right are seen fragments of three forms—one male and two female—and above them two rishis or ascetics with a small figure in front, and above it, a female figure. Opposite this group, on the left, are some traces of figures of dwarfs. A small figure peeping over the elephant's head is also visible.

The top of the panel is occupied by an interesting relief. In the centre of it, and immediately above the head of Siva, is a peculiar piece of carving, somewhat resembling a stūpa with a carved groove in the middle. It is held by two flying figures and is flanked by two worshippers, one on each side. Possibly this carving represents a Śiva shrine with a liṅga standing in the centre. At the extremities of the relief divine couples (mīthunas) are portrayed. The ceiling of this aisle still bears the traces of painting which, probably, at first decorated the whole cave.

A few paces from this compartment bring us to the north door of an interesting liṅga shrine, marked C on the plan, which stands in the west aisle, enclosed by four columns of the cave (Plate IX). It is a plain cubical cell and has four doors which face the principal directions. Each of these doors is approached by a flight of six steps which had to be provided as the floor
of the shrine was higher than that of the central hall of the cave by about 3½ feet. The doors have plain jambs with two bands around them. Inside, both in the floor and the roof, are the sockets for the door-posts which are now lost. On either side of each door we see the figure of a dhārapāla or door-keeper standing majestically. These figures are eight in number and vary in height from 14 feet 10 inches to 15 feet 2 inches. Some of them have also a dwarf attendant. All the door-keepers are crowned with a beautifully designed and exquisitely carved head-gear, a very prominent and attractive feature of these figures. The head-dress is shown as made up of the twists of matted hair in the form of a tall cap which is technically termed jatāmukuta. Of these eight dhārapāla figures, only one, at the south-east corner, is in a fair state of preservation (Plate I, Frontispiece). It is marked with a large human skull carved in front of its head-gear. The parted lips show the teeth. The figure is decorated with plain armlets and wristlets. A ball-like object is held in the right hand, which is up-turned and placed opposite the navel. The left hand rests on the knot of the robe outside the thigh, as is also the case in the other figures. The folds of the robe hanging behind the left leg of the dhārapāla on the south side of the east door are remarkably well cut. Each door-keeper wears a necklace of beads, and several of them are decorated with well-designed and carefully carved breast ornaments. The one on the western side of the southern entrance seems to have two letters cut underneath the right arm which may be read as 'Śiva'. They were, apparently, incised later.
The sanctum sanctorum is plain on the inside, no two sides of it being equal in their measurements. In the middle stands a pitha or pedestal which is 9 feet 9 inches square and about 3 feet high. In the centre of the pedestal there is a large hole in which a linga, cut from a stone of a harder and closer grain than that of the caves, has been fitted. The lower end of the linga is square but the upper portion is circular and measures about 2 feet 11½ inches in length. There are deep holes cut at each of the four corners of the altar which must have been used to fix an awning over the linga. In the compound outside, a big fair is held every year in February, on the occasion of the celebrated festival of Mahāśivarātri, when the votaries of Śiva visit Elephanta in large numbers to worship this linga.

The linga is the mysterious symbol of Śiva and represents the energy or the source of the generative power in nature. It is the principal idol, the central object of adoration in Śiva temples. The worship offered to this symbol consists in bathing it with water or milk or with both, besmeiring it with ghee and sandal-wood paste, presenting bīka (Acacia Marmelos) leaves and flowers to it, and also burning incense before it with the chanting of mantras or hymns.

Turning to the west and descending by a flight of steps to the court-yard below, a much decayed circular platform is to be seen directly in front of the shrine just described. It must have formed the base for the figure of Nandim, the celebrated vīṣṇu or vehicle of Śiva, which is now lost (see plan).
To the south of the court-yard, there is a spacious large water-cistern, 66 feet 3 inches long, 55 feet 6 inches wide and some 17 feet deep. A portion of the rock and the floor of the porch to the north-west seem to have fallen down and blocked the cistern some time ago. In 1924-25 the reservoir was cleared out and refilled with rain water. At the time of its clearance the above-noticed inscribed copper-jar, some fragments of sculptures, a number of earthen pots and a set of six bell-metal dishes were found. All these antiquities are now deposited in the Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay.

By the side of this cistern we see another small Linga-shrine which is furnished with a portico, measuring about 27 feet long, 13 feet 7 inches deep and 8 feet 10 inches high, and supported by two square pillars and as many pilasters, now destroyed. We enter the portico by a flight of steps. At the north end of it is a group of figures somewhat similar to those in the left or eastern recess, marked N in the plan, at the north entrance to the Main Cave. In the centre is Siva seated on a lotus throne, held up by two figures, probably Nagas, marked with heavy wigs, and with bodies shown up to the middle only. The left hand of Siva rests on his thigh; the right one is slightly raised. The arms are broken. Though the attributes are not clear, a comparison with similar sculptures elsewhere would show that Siva is here represented as Lakulisha (the Master or Wielder of the ladu or club). To his right there is a seated figure holding a plantain. A bearded ascetic is seen behind him. A similar
seated figure is shown on the left. Above this there is an image of Brahmā with some flying attendants on each side.

A door at the back of this portico leads into the shrine which measures about 10 feet 7 inches by 9 feet 7 inches. In the centre is a linga fixed in a roughly cut altar. On each side of the door is a dārapāla or warden with two demons at his feet and two fat flying figures above his shoulders. To the south of this door, that is, towards the left side of the visitor, is a group of figures in which Śiva performing the Tāṇḍava dance is most prominent. Here the god is represented as having six arms and three eyes, his high crown being ornamented with a crescent. The three right hands are mutilated. The front one must have held a cobra, and the one behind it, a club. The front left hand seems to hold the drapery, the object in the second is defaced, while the third hand is extended in the earada-mudrā or gift-bestowing pose, the palm being turned upwards. To his right side is a plantain tree with a figure sitting on the ground. Above is carved Brahmā, the god of creation sitting on a lotus born by a swan, his typical emblem and vehicle. To the left of Brahmā is a figure, which represents Yama, the god of death, riding a buffalo with a bell fastened to its neck. Near the front left arm of Śiva is to be seen a female figure, possibly Pārvati, wearing a neatly looped head-dress with a jewel on her forehead. Above her left shoulder is Indra, the king of gods, sitting on his elephant Airāvata. Behind him is Vahsun, with four arms, holding the chakra or discus in his second left hand and riding his vehicle Garuḍa.
In front of Garuda's wing is a small flying figure, and below, a male figure with a crescent.

The figures carved in the façade of this shrine are crude compared with those in the Main Cave and seem to be later imitations.

To the north of this shrine, a little above the drain, a small water-cistern has very recently been opened.

Returning to the Main Cave, we come to the beautifully carved but much damaged panel (marked D on the plan) representing the marriage of Śiva and Pārvati (Plate X). The figure of Śiva is 10 feet 10 inches high. Out of the four hands only the front left one is entire. The right leg is also missing. The god is here represented as having an oval nimbus behind the head and wearing the usual high jāṭāmukha or head-gear. He is putting on a girdle and a robe that comes over his right hip and is knotted at the left side. His left hand rests on the knot of the robe, the ends of which hang loosely. His jāṭānopacita or sacred thread hangs from his left shoulder and passes to the right thigh. His front right arm is stretched to receive in marriage the hand of Pārvati, which is broken. The face is smiling.

To the right of Śiva we see the graceful figure of the goddess Pārvati measuring 3½ feet in height. She is not yet wedded and therefore is shown on the right side. According to the Hindu or Brāhmanical custom the wife should occupy during ceremonial functions the left side of her husband. Excepting the legs and arms which are badly mutilated, the figure is fairly preserved. The hair of Pārvati is shown as escaping in small curls from under the broad jewelled fillet,
and behind her head is shown a disc which seems to form a part of her dress. She wears heavy ear-rings and necklaces, from one of which a string hangs down on her bosom and ends in a tassel. The whole figure is of striking beauty enhanced by the slightly inclined head and the bashful look. Behind her is to be seen the figure of a well-built man, possibly her father, Himālaya, whose right hand is on her right arm while the left holds up a necklace near Pārvati's left ear. His high cap and dress have been carved with more than usual minuteness. Though both the hands of Pārvati are broken, yet it would appear that her right hand was placed in the right hand of Śiva. Owing to its remarkable grace and symmetry the figure can be placed among the best sculptures of the early medieval period.

To the left of Śiva is a much defaced figure of Brahmā, sitting on his haunches, seeming to officiate as the chief priest in the marriage ceremony. Behind him stands Viṣṇu with four hands and a peculiar cylindrical cap. His front right hand appears to hold a lotus, and the back left hand, the chakra or quoit. The other two hands are missing.

Towards the right side of Pārvati, there stands a female with a fly-whisk in her right hand and a well-carved large drum in front. She is wearing necklaces as well as pendant ear-rings and holds a part of Pārvati's robe in her left hand. But for the fly-whisk befitting a maid-servant, she could well represent Pārvati's mother Menaḵā. Behind her is a male figure with a plain cap and curled hair and also a large vessel of water, evidently meant for being used in the marriage
Plate XI.

Gangadhara-Siva (Descent of the Ganges).
ceremony. The crescent indicates that he is Chandra, the Moon-god.

On each side of the head of Śiva, we see flying celestial mitūnas and ascetics extolling the married couple.

The next compartment encloses a colossal panel of Gangādhara-śiva (Descent of the Ganges), rare workmanship representing Śiva as Gangādhara, i.e., as carrying the river Gangā (Plate XI). This has been marked E on the accompanying plan. The legend connected with the scene depicted in this sculpture is as follows:—

Sagara, a mighty king of the Ikshvāku dynasty, had sixty thousand sons by one of his wives called Sumati. All these sons were very wicked and incurred the displeasure of the gods by their evil ways. When Sagara wanted to perform an aveśādha or horsesacrifice, he let loose a horse which Indra, the king of gods, stole away and tied in the hermitage of the great sage Kapila, without the latter’s knowledge. The wicked sons of Sagara traced the horse to the hermitage, and mistaking the sage Kapila for the thief, tried to attack him, but were burnt to ashes by his wrath. Sagara, finding that his sons did not return with the horse, sent his grandson Amśumat, the son of Asanaśa, to search for them. Discovering that his uncles had been reduced to ashes by the sage’s wrath, he implored Kapila for mercy and was told that if the water of the Ganges were sprinkled on their ashes, his uncles would go to heaven. Neither he nor his son could succeed in getting the water. Bhagiratha, the grandson of Amśumat, however, performed severe austerities
to propitiate the celestial river Gangā, who consented to come down to earth if someone could resist the force of her descent. Thereupon Bhagiratha took to tapas or penance and succeeded in thus pleasing Śiva, who stood up to receive Gangā and humble her pride. She came down with full force intending to crush Śiva under her weight, but when she fell on his head, she had to wind through the labyrinth of his locks of hair for a long time without finding an outlet. At the request of Bhagiratha, however, Śiva let her flow down to the earth and she followed Bhagiratha to the place where the ashes of his ancestors lay.

This compartment is 13 feet wide and 17 feet 1 inch in height and has a base rising to a height of some 2½ feet above the floor. The principal figures represent Śiva and his consort Pārvati, and measure 16 feet and 13 feet 4 inches in height, respectively. Śiva has four arms. His front right hand is held in the abhaya-mudrā or the pose of imparting security, while the rear right hand holds a jala or matted hair from which emanates a female figure whose legs alone are now visible. The back left arm is broken at the wrist but it is easy to see that it must have been directed towards the chin of Pārvati. The front left hand rested on the head of a pīśācha or goblin who seems to stagger under its weight. Śiva wears a necklace, open armlets, heavy bracelets and ear-rings. Round his waist passes an ornamented girdle, from under which his garment hangs down and is tied up in a knot on the left thigh. Over his left shoulder hangs the yajñopavita or sacred thread which passes on to the right side.
To the left of Śiva stands Pārvatī, wearing a circlet round the brow, from under which the hair is seen falling down in small curls to the temples. She wears ear-rings, necklaces, broad armlets, bracelets, anklets and a girdle with an ornamented clasp. Her left arm hangs down, while the right is bent and held up, but the fore-arm is broken off. Near Pārvatī’s shoulder is Vishnu on his vehicle Garuḍa with a serpent round his neck, while near Śiva’s right shoulder sits Brahmā on his lotus seat, carried by swans. He is holding a lotus in one of his right hands. To the right, near the foot of Śiva and facing him, is seated Bhagiratha with flowing matted hair. His arms are now broken but evidently the hands were in the anjali pose folded on his chest in adoration. Between Śiva and Pārvatī is a pāśā or goblin with plaited hair holding a chowry in his left hand and a cobra in the right. To the left of Pārvatī another similar figure is to be seen. The three-headed female figure above the head of Śiva evidently represents the Trīvēṇi or the confluence of the rivers Gāṇgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Above Brahmā on a level with the head of Śiva are six celestials, four males and two females. One of the male figures, which looks important, is holding a large elongated object resembling the banana fruit. Above Pārvaṭī there are six similar figures. All these celestials are shown flying in the air in a conventional way. Here it may be observed in passing that celestials with wings, like the peris, were not known to early Hindu mythology.

Next comes a plain building measuring 18 feet in length, 16 feet in width, and 9 feet in height, which might have been a storehouse or residential quarter.
of the priest in charge of the cave. The sockets would show that the building was provided with doors, now missing. A similar cell is seen on the opposite side also.

Next to the compartment depicting the scene of Ganga's descent is a panel, marked F on the plan, (Plate XII), containing the colossal figure of Maheshamurti-Siva, miscalled Trimurti, the most striking sculpture in the cave. It is situated in a recess, carved deep into the interior of the rock. Excluding the thickness of the pilasters in front, which is about 2½ feet, the recess is 10½ feet in depth. The pilasters are 15½ feet apart, but inside them, the recess is 21 feet 6 inches in width. In front of the pilasters stand dvârapâlas or door-keepers. The one to the spectator's left is more mutilated than the other and is 13½ feet high, the other being 12½ feet in height. Both are remarkably well carved and are shown in beautiful postures. Their well-executed head-gears are decorated with a crescent on either side. The dvârapâla to our right has his left arm placed on the head of an attendant, wearing a win necklace, and a belt. The door-keeper on the other side has an attendant standing in a half-crouching attitude. He has eyes and thick lips, and his tongue is thrust out. In the corners of the opening, both in the floor and in the lintel, are holes, apparently meant for door-posts, and in the floor there is a groove used, probably, for a screen or for a railing to keep off the spectators.

The well-proportioned three-faced bust, occupying this recess, represents Siva in the form of Mahesha or the Supreme Being. It is 17 feet 10 inches high from above the base which measures 2½ feet in height. The
three faces correspond to the three functions of the god, namely, the creation, the protection and the destruction of the universe. Trimūrti would be a correct name for this sculpture if the term is taken in the sense of 'triple-form' (tri-three and mūrti-form or figure) but not in that of the Trinity, or the Hindu triad representing three different gods, namely, Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva. The head-gear is no doubt done in the form of jātāmukūṭa, the characteristic of Śiva as well as of Brahmā. But as Brahmā is represented with four faces, this bust cannot be his. Nor can we identify it with Vishnu, for he wears a kirita and not a jātā-mukūṭa. Moreover the principal sculptures in the cave belong to the cult of Śiva. The bust, the central figure in the cave, must therefore naturally represent that divinity, i.e., Śiva. The three functions before mentioned, it is to be remembered, are attributed to three different gods in Hindu mythology. The creation of the universe is assigned to Brahmā, its preservation, to Vishnu, and the destruction, to Śiva. To assign them all to one divinity is a Vedāntic notion which recognises only one god manifesting himself in different forms. The Trimūrti, therefore, symbolises the oneness of God. The three heads emanating from one and the same body thus represent three different aspects of one and the same deity who can assume different forms and names in accordance with the functions he is performing.

1 As all the panels and carvings in the cave belong to the cult of Śiva, it will not be reasonable to suppose as some have done that the recess originally contained an image of Brahmā and that the caves were connected with the worship of that god.
The front or central face with a calm and dignified appearance represents Śiva as the Creator. The lower lip is thick and the breast adorned with several different necklaces. The front right hand is badly mutilated, excepting for a bangle on the wrist. The front left hand holds a māṇḍalaṅga or citron. The head is adorned with a richly wrought jaṭāmukutā having a crescent high up on the right side. In front of the hair is a royal tiara consisting of three large jewels, one of which is placed over the forehead, and the other two, over the ears. The central jewel cut in the kirtimukha form is elegantly designed and beautifully executed. The ears of this face are decorated with an ornament called the uṣṇikamukhajāla, as it is shaped like a mukara or crocodile, here carved in a conventional manner.

The face to our left representing Śiva as Rudra, the Destroyer, has a severe look, cruel eyes, a curling moustache and a beard. The head-dress serves as an abode for several snakes seen wriggling through the matted hair. The ornaments include some of the peculiar emblems of Śiva, such as the human skull seen over the left temple, and a large cobra with its expanded hood. The right hand, which is raised before the breast, holds a cobra twisted round the wrist.

The third face, lying to our right, represents Śiva as the Preserver of the universe. The calm and pacific expression befits this aspect of the deity. Of the three principal gods in the later Hindu mythology it is Viṣṇu who performs this function just as Brahmā does that of creation. For a Śaiva or devotee of Śiva, it is Śiva who is supreme and fulfils all these
duties and in him all these gods are unified. The
saras of this face appear to have been adorned with
a kālikaputra or conch-like ornament, now partly
broken. The hair escapes in very neatly curled ring-
lets from under the head-dress, which is very elaborat-
ely and tastefully ornamented with festoons or pearl
pendants. Above the temple is a large leaf, probably
that of a lotus, and higher up, at the junction of the head
with the central face, a lotus flower with a bud. The
left hand has bangles on the wrist similar to those on
the two front hands, and holds a lotus.

We next come to a panel, which is marked G on
the plan. Here Śiva is represented as Ardhanārīśvara
or half-male and half-female (Plate XIII). The
figure is 16 feet 9 inches high, with one of the four
hands on the male side leaning on the bull Nandin.
The head-dress consists of a high tiara from which two
heavy folds fall on the shoulder on the left or female
side, a crescent being shown on the right side. On the
left, the hair falls across the brow in a series of small and
neatly curved ringlets, while on the right, there is a
line of knobs along the under-edge of the tiara.
The right ear is drawn down and has only one ring,
while the left has a jewel in the upper part and a large
ring in the lobe. The girdle passing round the hips
is tied at the left side where the ends are shown
hanging down. The male arms wear twisted but open
armlets and thick wristlets. The left or female arms
have broad armlets and a long solid bracelet with thick
jewelled rings at the ends. The back pair of hands
of the figure is in a fair state of preservation, the right
hand holding a cobra and the left, a mirror. The
front left hand, now broken, seems to have held the lower part of the robe which hangs in folds over both the left arms. The front right arm, bent at the elbow, resting on the hump of the bull Nandhi, passes on to the left horn on which the hand rests.

Besides Śiva and Pārvati, some other principal divinities of the Hindu pantheon are also carved on this panel. At the left side near the back arm of the central figure we see the four-armed Vishnu riding his formidable vehicle Garuḍa, the king of birds, whose left wing is spread out. The lower left hand of Vishnu is raised and holds a chakra or discus swung round the forefinger and the other hand seems to have rested on the knee. Both the right hands are broken. Below is a woman holding a chāmara or fly-whisk in her right hand. Her head-dress is carved with minute detail and has a crescent on the left side. Her chignon seems to be decked with flowers. She has large ear-rings and a triple necklace. Two dwarfs are near her. The female to her left is wearing the usual jewellery and carries in her left hand what appears to be the toilet-box of Pārvati. Between the Garuḍa and the central figure is the bust of a female holding a flower in her left hand; above this are two other figures, one of whom seems to be Varuṇa, riding on a makara or crocodile, his vehicle. Behind Vishnu are a man and a woman, and under them is a dwarf holding a chāmara or fly-whisk.

On the male side of Ardhanārisvara and on a level with Vishnu are Indra and Brahmā. The latter is shown sitting on a padmāśana or lotus-seat, supported by five hamsas or swans. Three of his faces are visible, the fourth is supposed to be hidden behind the central
one. He has four hands. His back right hand holds a lotus but the front right one is broken. The back left hand has a sacrificial ladle, now mutilated, while the other holds a vessel of *ghee*. He is wearing necklaces and other ornaments, as well as a robe that passes over his left shoulder and breast. To his left we see Indra on Airāvata, the celestial elephant, whose head is well preserved. Indra holds the *vajra* or thunder-bolt in his left hand, and possibly an *aśūka* or goad in the right. Between Indra and Brahmā is a figure with a *śāmakā* in each hand. Below it is to be seen a large figure of Kārttikeya, the commander-in-chief of the gods, holding a spear in the right hand and wearing various ornaments and a high cap. Between this figure and the bull Nandīn is a woman with a *śāli* whisk resting on her shoulder; behind her we see a dwarf, and a woman whose head is mutilated. In the upper portion, on each side of the central figure, divine mātās and rishis are to be seen. Some of them carry garlands in their hands as offering to the great god Ardhanārīśvara in whom the two creative powers of the universe, the male and the female, are seen unified. Śiva the right half, represents the active, and Pārvati the left half, the passive principle in Nature.

Further east is a much damaged panel in the south wall of the east aisle, marked II on the plan, which depicts Pārvati in a somewhat affectionately angry mood (Sanskrit *raima*) towards Śiva. Both Śiva and Pārvati are seated together on a raised floor and are adorned with the usual ornaments (Plate XIV). Śiva has four arms, now broken. His face and the halo are also damaged. He is seated cross-legged
with his left leg resting horizontally on the floor, the right leg being slightly raised. The front left hand placed firmly on the seat is still traceable, with its bracelet, beside the left thigh. The front right hand seems to have rested on the right thigh. Pārvatī is seated to his left wearing a pendant tassel, now almost gone, hanging on her bosom from a thick twisted necklace such as is seen in the panel representing her marriage. Over the left arm and on the right thigh and leg, portions of her garments may still be traced. She appears in a half-sitting posture; her right leg bent at the knee rests horizontally on the floor. The position of her left leg gives an idea of her being ready to get down from the bull Nandin, seated directly below her. Behind her right shoulder stands a female figure with a fly-whisk in her right hand, wearing a crown-like head-gear, ear-rings and necklaces and carrying a child, possibly Śkanda, in her lap. On Pārvatī’s left, is another female attendant wearing the usual ornaments, and farther off, a male figure, his right hand near his breast and the left resting on the knot of his robe. Behind the right shoulder of Śiva is a female attendant, a fly-whisk in her right hand; and at his feet the skeleton form of the headless image of his faithful attendant Bhringi. Behind him is to be seen a tall figure with a high head-dress, ear-rings, necklace and a long robe covering the left arm down to the wrist. At the foot of this figure, in a recess behind the pilaster, stands a dwarf, who is 3 feet in height and has his arms crossed.

The panel is badly mutilated in the lower portion, i.e., beneath the platform on which Śiva and Pārvatī
are seated, and the figures carved on it cannot be made out with certainty. To the left of the bull Nandin is a fat dwarf wearing a wig. Below him are two animal figures, probably monkeys. How the left side was filled cannot now be determined. The rock over the head of Śiva and Pārvati is carved into patterns resembling irregular fruits on an uneven surface, possibly to represent the rocks of Kailāsa. At the top of each side are the usual mitānąs representing apsaras and pandhāraṇas or celestial musicians. Some of the male figures have curly wigs. An emaciated ascetic to the right holds a basket in his left hand and seems to scatter flowers with the right hand. A little above the head of Śiva, towards the left, a section of what seems to be a bell is to be seen. Possibly this also is a symbol for a ṛta ga shrine, like the one seen in the panel representing Śiva as killing the demon Anđhaka.

Next, we proceed to the east wing. Descending by a neat flight of steps, each 10 feet 10 inches wide, we reach a spacious court measuring 55 feet in width. This court must originally have had to the north side an opening, now filled to a considerable height with earth and stone thrown there when the court was cleared several years ago. In the middle of the court there is a circular platform, 16½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in height, which lies directly in front of the Śiva shrine in the wing. Apparently it was intended for the figure of Nandin which is now missing. To the south of the courtyard is a rock temple on a panelled basement measuring 3½ feet in height. The basement is supported by a low platform, 2 feet 4 inches high. The three courses of hewn stone now
placed on the basement, seem to be of modern origin. The façade is about 50 feet in length. On each side of the steps leading to the temple is a leogryph sitting on its haunches with the fore-paw raised. The head of the one on the west side is damaged. Whether these two statues are occupying their original places or were brought from outside cannot be stated definitely.

A flight of steps leads to a mandapa, marked I on the plan, 58 feet 4 inches long and 24 feet 2 inches wide, which is flanked on each of the east and west sides by chambers, marked J and K on the plan. At the back is a śāga shrine which has a āṣṭāṅga-patā or circumambulatory passage, varying from 8 feet 4 inches to 8 feet 9 inches in width. Five low steps and a threshold lead into the sanctuary, marked L on the plan, measuring 13 feet 10 inches wide and 16 feet 1 inch deep. Within is enshrined a śāga 2 feet 6 inches in diameter, inserted into a vādi or altar measuring 9 feet 5 inches square. This stands in the middle of the floor and is provided with a gargoyle shaped like the mouth of a tiger. The door of the sanctuary is now damaged, but the façade preserves the neat carving; the beautiful frieze running over the pilasters, and the crenellated moulding are still unimpaired.

On either side of the passage is a gigantic statue of a devarāja or warder with attendants. The statue near the east end is now much dilapidated. The one on the opposite side, that is, to the west of the portico, has four arms and a third eye on the fore-head. His headgear is tied in the jatāmañjūra fashion and his moustaches are very prominent. He has thick lips. His nose is damaged. A twisting snake seems tied in his
left ear. The elbow of his front left hand rests on the head of an attendant dwarf. The back hand, raised over the shoulder, seems to hold up his robe. The front right hand is broken off but the back one is extant and holds a snake. Above, on each side of his head, is a fat flying figure, probably of a celestial.

Going in the way of pradakshinā or clockwise round the circumambulatory path, a rectangular chapel measuring 10 feet 10 inches by 25 feet is to be seen at the eastern end of the ante-chamber. In front of it are two pillars and two pilasters, each measuring 10 feet 5½ inches in height. These are of the same type as the pillars in the main cave, though their capitals are not fluted. One pillar is broken and the other almost gone. Above there is an entablature of sunk panels, measuring about 11½ inches square. The mortices in the bases and the tops of the pillars show that there must have been a railing, with a door, in the centre of the entrance to the chapel. As the floor of the mandapa is low steps are provided to give easy access to the chapel.

The chapel contains several sculptures of good workmanship now soiled by smoke and damaged by rough handling. On the south side is a large figure of Ganesa with the rat, his vehicle, carved near the left knee. To his right is a squatting figure whose head seems to rest on the knee. There is also another figure holding a cobra. Above the head of Ganesa a flying couple or mithuna is seen on each side.

At the northern end of the chapel is a standing figure, probably of Siva, holding a trishul or trident, his left
hand resting on the defaced figure of a gana or attendant. Brahmā is sitting to the right on a lotus, supported by swans. Behind him is a monkey-faced dwarf and above, three figures, two of whom, a male and a female, hold offerings in their hands. On the left of Śiva is Viṣṇu, mounted on his vehicle Garuda and holding his mace in one of his right hands. He holds his chakra or discus in one of his left hands and the śankha or conch in the other. A male figure, below, holds the stalk of a lotus in the left hand. Between this figure and that of Śiva is a female holding a fly-whisk in her hand.

The western wall, facing the entrance, has some ten figures carved on it. Of these, the one at the north end represents Gana. Next to it is a much defaced male figure, probably of Viṣṇu. The remaining eight are female figures, all badly mutilated. They represent the Mātrikās or Divine Mothers who are the saktis (energies or wives) of the several gods in the Hindu pantheon. Their names are (1) Brāhma, the sakti of Brahmā, (2) Māhāśvari, the sakti of Mahāśvara or Śiva, (3) Vaishnavī, the sakti of Viṣṇu, (4) Kaumārī, the sakti of Kumāra, (5) Aindri, the sakti of Indra, (6) Vārāhī, the sakti of Varāha, (7) Nārasimhi, the sakti of Nārasimha, and (8) Chāmunḍā, a terrific form of Durgā. All have aureoles round their heads. Some carry children, others have them by their sides. Each has beside her a pole or staff surmounted by her ensign, such as a swan, a peacock, etc. The swan is the emblem and vehicle of Brāhma or Brahmānī, the peacock of Kaumārī, and so on. Their vehicles or vehicles are the same as those
THE MAIN CAVE

of the deities from whom they originated. These Mātrikās, according to the Mārkandeya-Purāna, were the ṣaktis or energies of the principal divinities, who came to attend on Durgā when she was about to kill the demon Raktabija in the fight against the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha.

Over these sculptures an architrave is to be seen which is 2 feet 10 inches deep. It consists of three plain parts of which the upper is divided into six and the lower into five spaces by various designs or ornaments such as are found in the caves at Ajantā or Kārli, though they differ from them in having a fantastic face which is technically termed kirtimukha (i.e., the face of fame). There is a sunken frieze between these parts, eight inches broad, which still retains the mineral colours with which it was originally painted.

The chapel on the opposite side is plain, its floor being sunk a few inches below the level of the plinth. It measures 27 feet 7 inches by 11 feet 7 inches and has two pillars in front. Water, oozing through the rock above, collects and mostly remains inside the chapel during the dry season. Tradition says that on the night of the Mahāśivarātri, the water of the Ganges comes through the roof of this chapel. On that occasion the people of the island and those from surrounding places flock to it to enjoy the benefit of this miracle and to attend the fair then held.

Returning to the Main Cave, and proceeding towards Rāvana under the north of the eastern aisle, we find a compartment Kailāsa, (marked M on the plan), depicting Rāvana attempting to uproot Kailāsa, the sacred residence of Śiva (Plate
XV). The legend connected with this sculpture is thus given in the Purānas:—

Rāvana conquered Kuhūra, the god of wealth, and wrested from him his vimāna or celestial car called Pūshpaka. While he was flying on it near Kailāsa, it suddenly stopped and could proceed no further. Not understanding what was the matter, Rāvana looked down and saw a dark coloured dwarf named Nandiśvara, who told him that he could not continue his journey that way as Śiva was sporting there and had made it inaccessible to everyone. On hearing this Rāvana was very much annoyed, and laughing contemptuously at his ugly appearance and his monkey face enquired of Nandiśvara as to who that Śiva was. Incensed at this insult Nandiśvara cursed Rāvana, declaring that he and his race would be destroyed by the very monkeys towards whom he had shown so much contempt. Rāvana retorted by saying that he would uproot the mountain and throw it out of his path. Then, putting his arms underneath, he lifted it off the earth. Pārvati, terrified at the sudden upheaval, clung to Śiva, who pressed the mountain down with the toe of his left foot, crushing the arms of Rāvana. Thereupon the latter wept bitterly and gave a tremendous roar that shook the whole world. His grandfather, Pūrṇaśraya, came and exhorted him to praise Śiva. Rāvana, whose pride was humbled, followed his advice and praised the deity who was moved by his prayers and released him.

Reverting to the study of the sculptures, we see Śiva and Pārvati seated together on the Kailāsa mountain. Śiva's third eye is clearly marked as are also his large
ear-rings. The figure seems to have had eight arms, now more or less broken. Two of them rest on the hands of attendants, as if the god were trying to steady himself at the sudden shaking of the mountain. One of his right hands holds the trisūla or trident, of which the head is still intact. Pārvati is sitting on the right side but her figure is badly mutilated. On each side of the compartment is a large figure somewhat resembling the doorkeepers round the linga shrine in the cave, but with a protuberance above the brows. The figure on the west side with a prominently carved forehead is marked by snakes emanating from behind his left shoulder. To the left of Śiva are several figures, all more or less defaced. In front, near his foot, in Bhūmī, easily distinguished by his skeleton form. To the left of Bhūmī, in front of the large figure behind the pilaster, is Ganeśa. Below this group is the ten-headed demon Rāvana, a sword stuck in his waist-band and his back turned towards the spectator. His ten heads are obliterated, and only a few of his twenty arms are traceable. Numerous figures are to be seen above Śiva; to his left is Viṣṇu riding his vehicle Garuda, and a tiger, the vehicle of Pārvati, crouches in the recess close by.

The next panel (marked N on the plan) is the last of Śiva in the series of the principal sculptures in the Main Cave, and occupies the recess at the eastern end of the main entrance to the north. Here Śiva sits cross-legged on a padmāśāna or lotus seat. (Plate XVI). The stalk of the lotus forming the seat is held by two Nāga figures visible to their waists. The head-gear of Śiva is elaborate and his head is surrounded by the usual
nimbus. The face, now much damaged, bears a placid contemplative expression. The arms are broken at the shoulders and it is difficult to say anything definite about them. It is to be regretted that a somewhat similar figure in the northern wall of the mandaps in the western wing of the cave is also similarly damaged, otherwise the identification of the sculpture would have been certain. Comparison, however, with a similar sculpture in the Dūrnār Lenā at Ellora would show that there must have been a club in one of the deity's hands, possibly the left. If this assumption is correct, we may recognise in this figure a representation of Lakulīśa, who, according to the Purāṇas, was the last (28th) incarnation of Śiva. Flying above the central figure are groups of celestials. At the right upper corner of the sculpture is the figure of Brahma seated on his vehicle, the swan, with Indra on the elephant Airāvata shown below him. The lower portion of the sculpture is occupied by several figures, one of which seems to represent Śūrya or the Sun-god holding a lotus in each of the two hands. To the left of Śiva is a plantain tree with three leaves expanded and the central germ rolled up. Under his left knee is what appears to be a sun-flower. On each side of the central figure we see a female with a fly-whisk. At the back of each of these attendants another female is seen, but so defaced that only the outlines can be distinguished. Below, on both sides of the plantain tree, are two mutilated figures. Over the plantain tree Vishnu rides Garuda with curly hair, the faces of both are obliterated. Above Vishnu is a figure riding a horse whose head and forelegs are broken.
and behind is a *right* or ascetic with a rosary in his hand.

The ceiling of this compartment still preserves faint traces of the original painting. From the accounts of the Portuguese writers it would appear that the interior of the cave as well as of the adjuncts was originally painted in different colours to enhance its beauty. De Couto, who noticed the caves in 1603, says that the whole interior, 'the pillars, the figures and everything else had formerly been covered with a coat of lime mixed with bitumen and other compositions that made it very bright and beautiful.' This colouring made the figures not only beautiful but their features and workmanship could be very distinctly perceived so that neither in silver nor in wax could such figures be engraved with greater nicety, fineness or perfection.' Gros (1750) was very much attracted by the beauty and freshness of the colouring of some of the paintings round the cornices. Erskine (1818) mentions several concentric circles with figures in the roof of the main entrance. In 1835 the remains of some paintings were still observable, which seemed to have originally been red, but had in some places faded to a purple blue. As has been noted, patches of this coloured coating are still preserved on the ceiling in the west portico and also in the Mātričkā chapel in the east wing. How these cave temples looked in ancient days when they were bright with such decorations only those can realize who know the grandeur of the Ajapitā paintings.
CHAPTER VI

SMALLER CAVES

Having visited the principal cave, we now come to the lesser caves of the Island, including those on the eastern hill. They are six in number. Four of them lie on the western and two on the eastern hill. The accompanying photograph (Plate XVII) is meant to give an idea of the former as seen from the opposite hill.

A short walk of about one furlong from the Main Cave towards the east brings us to Cave II, which does not appear to have ever been completed. It has a portico supported by four square pillars, and two unfinished cells. Sometime ago it was cleared along with both of its water-cisterns.

Cave III on the same level as the Main Cave and facing E. N. E. is a short distance away. Its extreme length is about 109 feet, inclusive of the chapel at the north end. The entrance is blocked by debris, which has been partly cleared, and the interior is much damaged by the water which collects inside the cave. The front was supported by six pillars and two pilasters with decorated shafts and capitals resting on square bases. These pillars have now fallen, but the pilaster on the right side with a part of the cornice remains. The mandapa or portico is internally 79 feet in length and 32 feet in breadth. The floor of the chapel at the north end of this mandapa is raised to a
height of 4 feet above the portico. Four octagonal columns and two pilasters originally supported the roof. The chapel is plain on the inside and measures roughly 39 feet by 22 feet.

A small chamber measuring 15 feet 9 inches by 10 feet 6 inches is near the chapel. Usually water lies in it to a depth of several inches even in the dry season. The walls of the next chamber, which formed the sanctuary, are of different dimensions. The one at the back measures 22 feet and that in the front, 20 feet 9 inches. The southern and the northern walls are respectively about 21 feet and 22 feet 4 inches in length. Three feet from the wall, opposite the entrance, stands a low vādi or altar, 7 feet 4 inches square. On either side of the entrance to the shrine is a door-keeper crudely carved but with a fine leoglyph above, and over it, a divine mithuna flying in the air. Though these figures are badly mutilated owing to the action of water yet the frieze and the jambs still preserve their original carving. In the centre of the lintel is a male figure with six arms, seated on a raised platform. To his left is another male figure, and a crocodile is on each side of this group. The third chamber at the southern end is plain and of the same measurements as the one at the northern end.

Still farther to the south of the Main Cave, is Cave IV which faces east and is even more dilapidated than the preceding one. The mandapa or portico is about 19 feet 6 inches long. At each end of the portico is a chapel originally supported in front by two pillars and two pilasters. The one at the north end is 23 feet 9 inches by 17 feet 4 inches and has a cell at the back which
measures 14 feet by 16 feet 4 inches approximately. The cell on the west side measures 13 feet 6 inches in front and 14 feet 9 inches at the back, the depth being about 15 feet. The chapel at the south end measures 21 feet 6 inches by 17 feet 4 inches and has a cell at the back which is 16 feet 7 inches long by 15 feet 10 inches deep. A shrine with two side chambers lies behind the portico. The door of the shrine is 4 feet 9 inches wide and has on each side of it large dvārāpālas or warden leaning on dwarfs with two flying figures over their heads. The sanctum measures 10 feet 10 inches by 10 feet 10 inches internally and has a low pālhā or altar, 6 feet 11 inches square, containing a bhūga measuring 23 inches in diameter. Each of the two side chambers measures 15 feet square and has doors with projecting pilasters and ornamental pediments. The horse-shoe ornament repeated several times in the carving of the doors is the principal decorative feature.

A little lower down the hill is Cave V, only partially cleared. The entrance is almost blocked with debris and the plain square cut pillars are the only objects to be noticed inside.

**Caves VI-VII.** Retracing our steps to cross the ravine and ascending the opposite hill to a height of about a hundred feet above the level of the Main Cave, we reach the sixth Cave (Plate XVIII). It has a portico facing W. N. W. and measuring 73 feet 6 inches long and 27 feet 4 inches wide at the north end and 25 feet 7 inches at the south. There are three chambers at the back and a piece of level ground in front. The portico has four pillars and two pilasters which measure 8 feet 5 inches in height and are about 2 feet square at the base. Two of them are
broken. The two side cells are plain but have neatly carved doors which measure 2 feet 11 inches wide and 6 feet 3 inches high. They are approached by two steps, 8 inches high, and a threshold of 4 inches. The architrave resting on the jambs is about 5 inches wide, with a simple moulding, and then comes a band 6½ inches broad, with a neatly wrought crenellated ornament. The northern cell measures roughly 12 feet 7 inches square and the southern, about 14½ feet by 15 feet.

The central chamber of the cave forms the shrine and has a door 7 feet 11 inches high and about 4 feet wide, having well-cut pilasters and a frieze. It has two steps, one of which is semi-circular and has a mutilated head of a lion on each side. The other step, measuring 7½ feet, has a low threshold in front. The shrine is almost square, each side measuring nearly 15 feet 7 inches internally. To the back wall is attached an altar, 4 feet 5 inches long, 2 feet 5 inches wide and 3 feet 4 inches high. It is neatly moulded and stands on a low platform, 7 feet 2½ inches by 8 feet 10½ inches. There is a gargoyle or water-spout to the north of it. Its top is hollow, the cavity being 17 inches long and 6 inches wide, but no basin or any other image is fixed in it.

The cave, as has already been noted, was used as a Christian church when it was in the possession of the Portuguese.

About 150 yards north of this cave is a small excavation with three partitions or cells. Apparently it was not completed and there is nothing remarkable about it.

Farther on towards the north-east and under the Granz summit of the hill, are three walls cut in the rock, with openings which measure about 2½ feet square. Near
these wells are some brick foundations, and on the summit of the hill above are the remains of some structure, the nature of which is still to be determined. Possibly they belonged to some Buddhist buildings.
APPENDIX.

In the foregoing pages all the principal sculptures or scenes carved in the caves of Elephanta have been described. Some iconographical notes about the divinities represented in the excavations are here appended with a view to facilitate further study. That the sculptures of these caves are connected with the Hindu pantheon of the 'epics' and not of the Vedas need not be emphasized. The Hindus since the Vedic age recognize three main gods, namely, Brahmā the Creator, Viṣṇu the Preserver, and Śiva the Destroyer. Other gods, including Indra who is called Devaraja or king of the gods, and Sūrya are subordinate to them. Even in this triad Viṣṇu is considered to be the chief. According to the Purāṇa-Parāṣa, Brahmā, as a result of the curse pronounced on him by his wife, Sāvitri, because of his ignoring her at the time of the sacrificial initiation or Āśā and of his putting Gāyatri in her place, has no following, so much so that temples exclusively dedicated to his worship are extremely rare, though his image is often seen in the temples of other gods. It would appear that "the two deities Viṣṇu and Śiva gradually absorbed the special attributes of Brahmā, who as the chief divinity of a sect ceased to claim many votaries for two reasons: first, because, as a symbol of prayer, he was held to be present in all worship; secondly, because, as a symbol of creation, his special work in the cosmos was finished and he could no longer be moved by prayer". That view would resolve Hinduism into two main sects, namely, Brahmanism and Saivism, the former recognizing Viṣṇu and the latter, Śiva as the chief God. The Sūras or the devotees of Sūrya, the Sun-god, are included amongst the former, and the Śaktas or the worshippers of Śakti, in the latter. Śakti or Divine Energy is united in Pārvati or Durgā, the consort of Śiva. Durgā has various aspects or forms in which she is worshipped by the Śaktas. Mahishasuramardini or the vanquisher of the Mahisha or Buffalo-女神 is one of her principal forms and is depicted in some of the sculptures in the Main Cave. All the Brahmical gods are supposed to have their respective Śaktis named after them, but Pārvati or Durgā is the chief and represents all the Śaktis, who
are considered to be her abhishtis or manifestations of power. Pārvati is the left half of Śiva, and her worship goes hand in hand with that of Śiva.

The true worshipper of a divinity has to look upon the ṇāhuṁtvā as supreme and as the only fulfferer of prayer. Thus each deity becomes supreme and may be regarded as a symbol or manifestation of all the powers of the One Supreme God. It is because of such ideas that the term Henotheism or Katheotheism is sometimes applied to the religious belief of the Hindus. The Vedāntic conception embodied in the maxim महाभ्राति, meaning 'there is only one unsurpassed God', is a development of such ideas.

Only the chief characteristics of the main divinities connected with the sculptures in the caves of Ellora are mentioned below. For fuller details some work on Hindu mythology should be consulted. The names of these gods are given here in alphabetical order.

Arjuna is the god of fire. He rides a ram, has two faces, three legs and seven arms, holding various weapons. Śvāhā and Śvaṁśa are the names of his wives and are also used as exclamation for making oblations to gods and manes respectively.

Asura in the Purāṇas is a general name for the enemies of the gods.

Brahmā has four heads and as many arms. He may be represented as standing, or as seated on a kōtan (swan) or a lotus. On his chest he has a goṣṭīśvarī or sacred thread. His hands may carry the following emblems: (1) whetstone or razor, (2) kārṣṭā, i.e., a handful of kāśa grass, (3) kind of bowl or gourd, (4) dṛṣṭā, i.e., a large wooden ladle, (5) kīrā, i.e., a small sacrificial ladle and (6) the ṛṣiṣṭu, i.e., a vessel for holding clarified butter. Two of his hands may be shown in the abhaya (safety-imparting) and the varad (boon-giving) postures. He may be represented as seated in a chariot drawn by seven swans. At times the four Vedas and the ṛṣiplūṣas are shown in the front, and rishiis around him. Sometimes he is represented with only two arms instead of four, the right arm being bent with the palm turned upwards.

Dakṣa, the son of Brahmā, is one of the progenitors of the human race. He had twenty-four fair daughters, person-
APPENDIX

sations of domestic virtues. Of them Sati, personification of truth, selected the uncourtly ascetic Siva for her husband and thus incurred the displeasure of Dakshा. The latter once celebrated a great sacrifice, but invited neither Sivas, his son-in-law, nor Sati, his own daughter. Sati, however, went to the sacrifice of her own accord, and was much insulted. She thereupon threw herself into the fire and perished. Siva hearing this was angry and, going to the sacrifice, completely destroyed it. He penned Dakshас and decapitated him, but afterwards restored him to life. Thereafter Dakshа acknowledged his supremacy. According to another account, Sivas, on hearing of the incident, pulled off a half of his head in great anger and dashed it against the ground. A powerful demon arose who, being reduced by Sivas, went to the sacrifice and completely destroyed it cutting off the head of Dakshа at the same time. This demon is consequently regarded as an incarnation of Sivas and is known by the name of Vīrabhadra.

Durgā—See below under Pārsva.

Garbha, the god of success andнием, is the elder son of Śivas and Pārśva. He has the head of an elephant, and a mace for his weapon. He may be shown standing or seated, with two, four or more hands, holding an axe as (goad), a vessel of sweet curds and other attributes.

Garuda, the son of Kuśāya by his wife Vinatā, is the king of birds, and the implacable enemy of serpents. He is the chariot or vehicle of Viṣṇu.

Indra is the king of gods, holds the axes or thunderbolt, in his hand and rides an elephant called Abharraca.

Aṣṭā or Indrāṇī is Indra’s wife or student whose emblems are similar to those of her husband.

Kumāra or Kārttikeya, the second son of Śivas, is the god of war and the commander-in-chief of the gods. Usually he is represented with six faces, his cognizance being the peacock and the long staff or spear in his hand. He is one of the chief agents of Śivas’s destructive power and is the terror or vehicle of the peacock, an appropriate emblem for the prince and pump of war.

Mātrikā or Divine Mothers, seven or eight in number, are the representations of the energies of the principal gods of the Hindu pantheon. They are Brāhma, Māheśvarī, Aṃśa or
Siva is one of the three principal gods. He is especially the destroyer. In the Vedas, he is known as Rudra, 'the Terrible', but in the epics he is usually called Siva, 'the Auspicious one'. His preeminent worship developed in the epic period. He controls creation and the r̥ṣita or phallos is his symbol. One of his forms is Ardhanārisvara, half-male and half-female, symbolising the unity of the generative principles. He has three eyes, one of which is in the forehead. They represent his view of the three divisions of time, the past, the present and the future, while the crescent, above the central eye, marks the measure of time by months; a serpent round his neck, the measure of years; and the necklace of skulls and serpents about his person, the perpetual revolution of ages as well as the successive extinction and generation of the races of mankind. His thickly matted hair is called about his forehead. On his head he bears the Ganges, and is consequently called Gangesahara. His dark blue throat is due to the deadly poison he swallowed to save the world when the gods churned the ocean to obtain soma or the nectar of immortality. He wears the skin of an elephant and holds in his hand a trisula or trident, his principal weapon. He carries a kind of drum called damaru, holds a drum in one of his hands, and rides a bull called Kamāli generally shown in front of his shrine or image. He married twice. His first wife Sati committed suicide on being insulted by her father Daksha. She was born as Pārvati the daughter of Himālayas, the king of mountains, and through severe penances reobtained Siva for her husband. In this form she is known by several names such as Durgā, Kāli, Umā, Gaurī, Bhavānī, etc., and is the chief object of worship with the Śaktis, who adore Śakti or Divine Energy as the Supreme Being.

Siva is also worshipped as a great ascetic and is said to have reduced Kāma, the god of love, to ashes by a glance from his central eye, because Kāma attempted to create in him passion for Pārvati whilst he was engaged in meditation. As the destroyer of the universe he is said to have burnt the whole
world as well as the gods, including Brahmā and Vishnu, and rubbed the ashes thus produced upon his body. The use of ashes by his worshippers is connected with this myth. The legend that Śiva, on his way to destroy the demon Tripura, let fall tears of rage which grew into berries called raddikala (—the eye of Rudra) gave rise to the use of rosaries of these beads by the worshippers of Śiva. Kailāsa, one of the loftiest northern peaks of the Himālayas, is considered to be the favourite abode or heaven of Śiva.

Sūrya is the sun god usually represented as holding lotus flowers in his hands and sitting in a chariot drawn by seven horses. Aruna the younger brother of Garuḍa is his charioteer.

Trimūrti—It is the symbolical representation of the unification of the three principal gods of the Hindu pantheon, namely, Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva, who, according to the mono-theistic conception, are the hypostases of one and the same Supreme Soul (Paramātma).

Varuṇa in later mythology is the god of the ocean and of the western quarter. He is represented with a noose in his hand and as riding a crocodile.

Virabhadra is the powerful attendant of Śiva. See under Dakṣa.

Vishnu, the principal god in the Hindu Trinity, is differently represented in different places. He is usually shown seated on his vehicle Garuḍa. He has on his breast a peculiar mark called Srivaiśła and holds in his four hands the chakra or discus called Simhaśana, the gada or mace named Kaumudika, a pāda or lotus, and the āḍha or couch named Pāndalayāya.

Yama is the god of death who holds a stout staff or danda in his hand and rides a buffalo.
GLOSSARY.

Appanu.—A celestial nymph.
Architrave.—The beam or lowest division of the entablature, which rests immediately on the column.
Corinice.—Moulded projection crowning the part to which it is fixed.
Entablature.—The portion of the structure supported by the columns and consisting of the architrave, frieze and cornice.
Frieze.—The part of the entablature lying between the architrave and cornice and enriched with figures or other ornaments.
Ganas.—Attendants of Śiva.
Gandharvas.—Celestial musicians.
Himsāva.—See under Mahāyāna.
Janmukha.—Head-gear formed by the twists of united hair into a tall cap.
Kirtimukha.—A conical cap sometimes ending in an ornamented top carrying a central pointed knob. Covered with jewelled bands round the top as well as the bottom, it is worn exclusively by Vishnu.
Kirtimukha.—Literally means “the face of fame,” but is used to signify a conventional sculptural design which is characterised by a grinning face.
Mahābhārata.—The great Sanskrit epic of India, the theme of which is the war between the sons of Dripataraśtra and the sons of Pāndu. It consists of eighteen books and is commonly attributed to the sage Vyṣāva.
Mahābhārata.—A great festival of the worshippers of Śiva which falls on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Māgha, i.e., January-February.
Mahāyāna (GREAT VEHICLE) is a later phase of Buddhism, the earlier or the original form being known as Hinayāna (=Little or Humble Vehicle). These names originated with the Neo-Buddhists who extolled their own church as vast or great and called the other one Bad, Humble or
Glossary

Little. The original doctrine required ascetic discipline which did not appeal to the laity. Mahayana became more popular, for it was more akin to Brahmanism. Mahayanaism is a pantheistic doctrine with a theistic tinge, in which the Buddha takes the place of the personified Brahman of the Vedánta. It recognizes Buddhas and the cult of Bodhisattvas (Beings destined to become Buddhas) and allowes pompous ceremonies and the worship of images which do not appeal to a Hinayanaist, who holds that Buddha has attained Nirvana and cannot be worshipped consequently. It is owing to this belief that we do not find images of Buddha in the early sculpture. The Mahayanaist would worship the Primordial Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, his attendants, in the representations. With the growth of this doctrine the margin of difference between the Hindus and the Buddhists gradually faded almost entirely away. This infusion led to another type of theology, viz. the Tantric form of worship in which God is worshipped with his Shakti and which was the chief cause of the decline of Buddhism in India. Both these phases, i.e., Mahayana and Hinayana spread in India and abroad. In Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Cambodia it is the Hinayana form that is professed. In Korea, China and Japan both exist, the Mahayana predominating, while the Buddhism of Nepal, Tibet, and Mongolia is the Mahayana with a considerable infusion of Tantric ideals.

Mudra.—Pose of hand.

Naga.—A semi-divine being having the head of a man and the tail of a serpent, inhabiting Patala or the nether regions.

Padmasana.—A lotus seat or a kind of sitting posture in which the legs are crossed and the hands are placed in the lap with the palms turned upwards.

Pradakshina.—A ceremonial act performed by walking round a sacred edifice, object or person from left to right or clockwise.

Patanjali.—18 sacred works or epics supposed to have been composed by Vyasa. Their names are:—(1) Apai, (2) Bhāgavata, (3) Bhaishajya, (4) Bhāma, (5) Brahmanda, (6) Brāhma-vaivartita, (7) Gauḍa, (8) Kārma, (9) Liṅga,
(10) Mārkandeya, (11) Matagya, (12) Nārada, (13) Padma,
(14) Śiva, (15) Skanda, (16) Vāmana, (17) Vardha and
(18) Vishnu-Purāṇa.

Stūpa.—Primarily a funeral mound or tumulus, but with the
Buddhists a structure erected either to enshrine some relic
of the Buddha or of a Buddhist saint or to commemorate some very sacred spot.

Sahāmāra.—The heaven of the eternal Buddha Amitābha of
the Mahāyānists.

Tāṇḍava.—The cosmic dance of Śiva, symbolising the perfect
joy Śiva feels in the creation, which he makes, controls,
destroyes and renews at will. It is so-called after Tāṇḍava, the
devoted worshipper of Śiva.
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